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MAR 14 2005

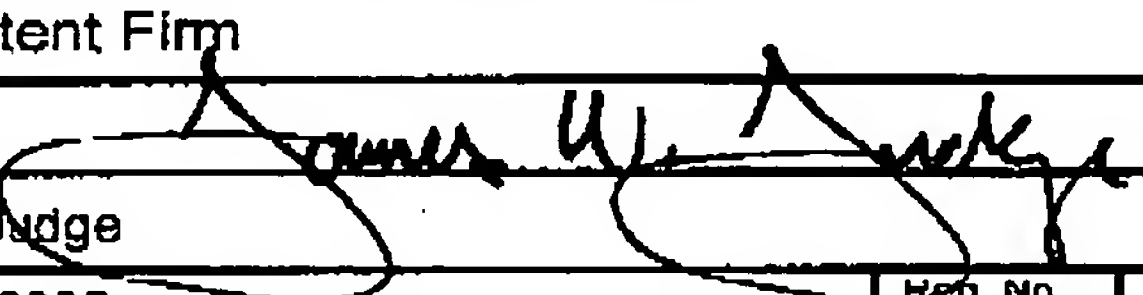
PTO/SB/21 (09-04)
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TRANSMITTAL FORM (to be used for all correspondence after initial filing)	Application Number	10/707,473	
	Filing Date	December 17, 2003	
	First Named Inventor	Hiromi Ito	
	Art Unit	3728	
	Examiner Name	Anthony D. Stashick	
Total Number of Pages in This Submission	6	Attorney Docket Number	38.002-AG

ENCLOSURES (Check all that apply)		
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SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT, ATTORNEY, OR AGENT

Firm Name	Judge Patent Firm		
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Date	March 14, 2005	Reg. No.	42,701

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

App. No. : 10/707,473 Confirmation No. 1472
Applicant : Hiromi Ito
Filed : December 17, 2003
Tech. Cntr./Art Unit : 3728
Examiner : Anthony D. Stashick

Docket No. : 38.002-AG
Customer No. : 29453

Honorable Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT – Supplemental

Sir:

Further to the Information Disclosure Statement filed on May 10, 2004 in the patent application identified above, the present paper presents a discussion of references submitted in the previous IDS, together with general remarks concerning features of the invention to which the present application is directed.

SUPPLEMENTAL REMARKS

As noted in the IDS filed May 10, 2004, the references itemized as Cite Nos. A1, F1, F2 and F3 on Form PTO/SB/08A therein were cited in a communication from the European Patent Office in a counterpart application. A copy of the European Search Report was submitted in that IDS, as a concise explanation of the relevance of Cite Nos. F1-F3, which are not in English.

Nevertheless, Applicant, desiring to provide a detailed discussion of each of the references cited in the EPO communication, below submits an analysis of Cite Nos. A1, F1, F2 and F3, followed by a summary of distinguishing features of the present invention, made all the more apparent in the contrasting light of the analysis.

Analysis of References

- **Cite No. F1** – This reference discloses a shoe in which a zipper is provided along the vamp in the shoe upper, with a snap button 13 furnished on the zipper pull-tab 12, and the snap mating part 14 furnished on the ankle-bone covering part of the heel, wherein connecting the snap mating parts together fastens down the zipper pull-tab.

App. No. 10,707,473
IDS Submission dated March 14, 2005

The zipper in the shoe disclosed in Cite No. F1 is not is not provided running horizontally along the sole, as is the case in the present invention as claimed. Rather, the zipper is provided partway up the vamp, splitting the vamp from the toecap and a standing portion of the outer side of the upper. Nor is the quarter unilaterally split from the vamp, as is the case in the present invention as claimed. Moreover, the zipper pull tab is fastened down by means of a snap connector in the Cite No. F1 shoe, whereas in the present invention the pull-tab is furnished with a first hook-and-pile fastener that interlocks with a second, complementary hook-and-pile fastener provided on the quarter.

- **Cite No. F2** – The rear half of the vamp in this footwear is covered by flaps that lace together as part of a boot, while the upper side of the front half of the vamp engages with standing sides of the upper by a zipper in an L-form along the toe cap and the outer part of the vamp.

The zipper in the shoe disclosed in Cite No. F2 is not is not provided running horizontally along the sole, as is the case in the present invention as claimed. Nor is the quarter unilaterally split from the vamp, as is the case in the present invention as claimed. Moreover, it appears that the zipper pull tab could be fastened down only by tucking it under the flap adjacent the pull-tab when the zipper is closed, and lacing the boot tight to cinch down the flaps.

- **Cite No. F3** – This reference discloses a shoe with a centrally split vamp that zips the upper side together linearly.

The zipper in the shoe disclosed in Cite No. F3 is not is not provided running horizontally along the sole, nor is the quarter unilaterally split from the vamp, as is the case in the present invention as claimed. Moreover, in the absence of any disclosure or teaching to the contrary, it appears that the zipper pull-tab locks down in the conventional manner—as would the zipper pull-tab on, say, a pair of trousers.

- **Cite No. A1** – Applicant's Paris Convention priority date of December 18, 2002 indicates a date of invention that precedes the date this U.S. patent application was published. Nevertheless, for the record it is noted that all embodiments disclosed in this reference include a "resilient foot holder" through which the foot can be slipped in and out laterally, enabling the wearer to get in and out of the shoes without bending over, with the shoe-removal operation being assisted in some embodiments with a toe protrusion on each shoe that interlocks with a complementary heel protrusion on the other.

Quite clearly, Cite No. A1 nowhere discloses, nor in any way teaches or suggests—contradistinctively to what is the case in the present invention as

App. No. 10,707,473
IDS Submission dated March 14, 2005

claimed—a zipper provided running horizontally along the sole, the quarter being unilaterally split from the vamp, nor means for fastening down a zipper pull-tab.

Summary

A shoe in accordance with the present invention, for persons who—due to lack of flexibility in, or swelling in, their skeletal joints—have trouble putting on conventional shoes, can be fastened onto the foot in a single-stroke, single-handed operation, by simply pulling the zipper pull-tab shut and pressing it against the quarter, to interlock it with the complementary Velcro® fastener on the quarter.

When zipped open—which is done in an operation that is also single-handed—the sole of the shoe is completely exposed, enabling the foot to be put into the shoe easily. The wearer can simply stand into shoe rather than crouch to put it on. That is, rather than putting the shoe onto the foot or inserting the foot into the shoe, the wearer just places his or her foot into the shoe with the shoe resting on floor.

Then, to fasten the shoe snugly onto the foot, the zipping is done in one stroke in a horizontal plane; zipping around a right-angle bend to shut the split between the vamp and quarter is unnecessary, as the two are fastened automatically when the overlapping portion of the vamp falls into place on the complementary portion of the quarter along the split, and the zipper pull-tab is pressed onto the quarter to secure the Velcro® fastener on the pull-tab onto the complementarily interlocking Velcro® fastener on the quarter. Thus the shoe collar is snugged around the ankle, wherein the fastening system of the present invention allows greater flexibility in fitting the shoe to the wearer's foot according to the condition of the foot—which may, for example, be swollen.

It is oftentimes the case that persons who, due to lack of flexibility in, or swelling in, their skeletal joints, have trouble putting on conventional shoes also lack dexterity in their hands. The fact that a shoe according to the present invention can be fastened on as just noted is of great benefit to such dexterity-impaired wearers. In particular, such wearers can take advantage of an assist tool as depicted in the attached page of illustrations (as is detailed in Japanese Unexamined Pat. App. Pub. No. 2004-159838). The fact that the zipping in a shoe of the present invention is in a single plane, and that fact that no buttoning, hooking, or lacing is involved in fastening the pull-tab onto the quarter, enable the wearer to take advantage of such an assist tool. The wearer can snugly fasten the shoe on without need for dexterity in the fingertips to fiddle with snaps, laces, hooks, etc.

In contrast, the wearer of shoes according to the Cite No. F1 and No. F2 references would not be able thus to take advantage of such an assist tool, since in those cases the zipper pull-tab is either snapped fast or, presumably, laced down under a flap.

App. No. 10,707,473
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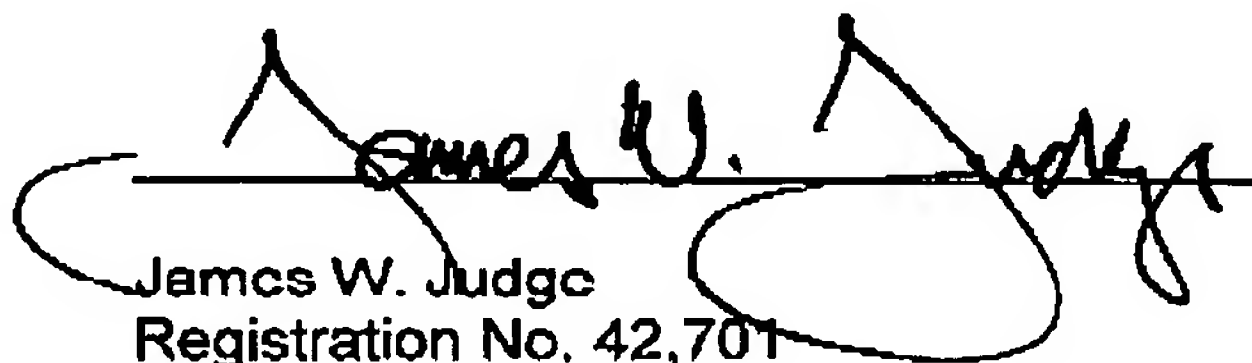
Thus the fastening system of the present invention is not simply a replacing of the snap or lace-anchoring of the zipper pull-tab with a Velcro® anchor; the fastening system is a configuration that achieves a synergy enabling single-stroke, single handed fastening of the shoe.

The prior art discussed in the forgoing makes clear that when zippers are employed to fasten on a shoe, there has been a felt need in the art to anchor the pull-tab to prevent the zipper from coming undone. The present invention fulfills that need in a unique way, uniquely geared to wearers who—due to lack of flexibility in, or swelling in, their skeletal joints—have trouble putting on conventional shoes and who thus may also lack dexterity in their hands.

Particularly in light of the foregoing discussion, favorable action by the Examiner at an early date is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

March 14, 2005



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Attachment

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